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debt that we owe to the original mind which definitely formulated the problem of natural death and hopefully sought its solution. It is the courage of inventors—a courage not blind, but based on knowledge—which perhaps deserves our highest praise. Just as survival after bodily death was courageously posed as a practical problem by Myers, so with equal courage and venturesomeness the problem of the indefinite prolongation of human life was set forth by Metchnikoff. To get a hearing for such proposals was, in each case, no mean achievement.

Still less should we forget that the fame of Elie Metchnikoff rests solidly upon his demonstration of the theory of phagocytosis or intracellular digestion—a theory which has wrought a change in the theory of medicine comparable to that caused by the discovery of antiseptic surgery. The striking fact is that Metchnikoff arrived at his conclusions working from the standpoint of a biologist and student of natural history; he invariably began with the study of lower forms of life. Theory, general knowledge, of the sort generally deemed impractical, simply waits for the man capable of using it for practical purposes. Such a man was Metchnikoff—one of the few great men whose insight nullifies the persistent popular distinction between “theory” and “practice.” To those men whose minds are capable of grasping a whole province of knowledge, rather than a single subject, we must still look for progress.

It was Metchnikoff's wish that in the biography which he and his wife had planned together his faults should not be concealed. What is revealed is a temperament of a somewhat neurotic type. Despairing of happiness, Metchnikoff once inoculated himself with relapsing fever in order to end his life. In his stern intellectuality combined with extreme sensibility, he reminds one of Nietzsche more than of any other man of genius. The human interest of the narrative is thus neither small nor mean. It is the natural pessimists, after all, who have given us our best optimistic philosophy, and the optimism of Metchnikoff, originating in skepticism and mental depression, is of an enduring kind.

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MEMORIES AND NOTES OF PERSONS AND PLACES. By Sir Sidney Colvin. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

While Sir Sidney Colvin's memoirs are by no means lacking in the charm of concrete detail and in the sentiment that attaches to the past, their remarkable feature is the critical spirit in which they are written. Thus the reader finds with a certain surprise, as he reads on, that he is being doubly profited. There is a solidity and permanent interest in the facts related, to which one is scarcely accustomed. Memories of persons and places, though not infrequently entertainingtaining, are often diaphanous; they are fragile mental structures which do not well sustain analysis, and the historian commonly finds remarkably little in them. Sir Sidney, however, gives us much precious truth, unalloyed and well polished.

Most fortunately for us, moreover, Sir Sidney cannot refrain from summing

up. He has given us perhaps the best brief, general estimate of Ruskin (whom he knew well) that has thus far been written. Similarly his estimates of Burne-Jones, of Rossetti, and particularly of Robert Browning are illumined by a very dry light, however brightly the colors of sentiment may play over the narrative. Robert Louis Stevenson, Fleeming and Anne Jenkin, George Meredith, William Ewart Gladstone, Victor Hugo, and Leon Gambetta, all appear in the book—and always with the slightly curious result that one's real respect for these persons is subtly augmented, while the critic, preserving his critical independence, strictly avoids alike indiscriminate eulogy and that romanticism which loves to play with eccentric traits.

In sum, it may be said that no man of letters has produced a book of reminiscences more charmingly literary and at the same time freer from the vices of "literature" as practiced nowadays than has Sir Sidney Colvin.

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FORTY ODD YEARS IN THE LITERARY SHOP. By James L. Ford. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company.

No attempt can be made to exploit in a brief review the various beauties and shocks, and darings, and insults, and saintly manifestations of good humor or tolerance, which make up James L. Ford's life record. The reviewer must simply throw up his hands and resort to generalities. Like Mr. Ballou's revolver, the book is "too confoundedly comprehensive," and the author might have written on his title page what Mark Twain wrote upon the title page of *Huckleberry Finn*: "Anyone attempting to find a plot [or a meaning] in this narrative will be shot." Mr. Ford's knowledge of celebrities ranges from Peter Cooper to the king of confidence men; from John Fiske and William Dean Howells to the lowly lecturer in a dime museum. His acquaintances are all intimacies, and his secret joy in living equals his secret fondness for people. Cheerfully he turns the old coat of life seamy side out and makes us feel that we can be happy as tramps while wearing the garment thus reversed.

A wholesome astringent quality in these memoirs, an absence of the usual sentiment, a complete freedom from solemnity of any kind, and with all these admirable traits, a genuine untheoretic appreciation of sound character and of good work, make the book one of those few valuable contributions which the real man of the world occasionally makes to popular education. Of all kinds of knowledge, that which is termed "knowledge of life" is most generally and unaffectedly prized. The phrase is distressingly vague. Is there such a thing, and, if there is, can it be taught? If these questions be answered in the affirmative, then one must say that Mr. Ford's virile and entertaining book is not only a thing of delight for the old and middle-aged, but a work of edification for the young.

In all but coherence, Mr. Ford's reminiscences rival that best of recent American autobiographies, *The Americanization of Edward Bok*, and it is partly for this reason that one cannot refrain from quoting his *bon mot* to the effect